

[Home](#)
[About Us](#)
[Church Growth](#)
[Directory](#)
[Leadership](#)
[Ministry](#)
[New Church](#)
[News](#)
[TAP/PATHWAYS](#)[Donate](#)

Thursday, 14 Feb 2013

News[Breaking News](#)[Feature Focus](#)[Celebrate](#)[Conference News](#)[Local Church News](#)[Lifting Up...](#)[NEWS Archives](#)[Resources](#)**SECUCC eNewsletter****Sign up for SECUCC****Email Newsletter** YOU ARE HERE: [HOME](#) ► [LOCAL CHURCH NEWS](#)**Local Church News - February 2013**

Barbara Brown Taylor and David Gushee to address Piedmont College conference on religion and politics, Feb. 22-23



Religion and politics, two subjects certain to start a "conversation," will be at the center of a two-day Piedmont College conference to be held in Athens, GA, in February.

"Faith and Citizenship: Religion in the Public Square" is the theme for the college's sixth annual Religion and the Liberal Arts Conference, which will feature addresses by Barbara Brown Taylor, professor of religion at Piedmont; and by David P. Gushee, director of the Center for Theology and Public Life at

Mercer University.

"While the recent presidential election served to focus issues, the debates do not end once votes are cast," said conference organizer and Piedmont chaplain Ashley Cleere. "Concerns about justice, privacy, hospitality, neighborliness, and compassion occupy both religious and political discourse."

Cleere said the conference will examine the role religion plays in questions such as, "Who may be married? Is torture ever right? How much responsibility do humans bear for climate change? When does life begin? When is prayer appropriate in public settings? Under what circumstances are immigrants to be welcomed? How are health care needs to be met?"

The conference will be held Feb. 22-23. The fee is \$150 per person, which includes the evening banquet and address Feb. 22 at the Classic Center, as well as the plenary address, two workshop sessions, and two meals on Feb. 23 at the Piedmont College Athens campus. For more information about the conference, accommodations, and online registration, visit www.piedmont.edu/rc.

Barbara Brown Taylor has been an Episcopal priest since 1984 and is the author of 12 books, including the *New York Times* best-seller "An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith." She has taught religion at Piedmont College, where she holds the Butman Chair in Philosophy and

**UCC News****UCC Newsroom**

Headlines from the United Church of Christ

UCC groups host immigration reform vigils on Ash Wednesday

To commemorate Ash Wednesday and the beginning of the church's penitential season, several United Church of Christ groups and congregations hosted immigration reform prayer vigils Feb. 13

Southeast Conference FAQ's[Who is the SEC?](#)[Who is the UCC?](#)[How Do I Find a UCC Church?](#)[What Ministries are Available?](#)[Is Training Available?](#)

holds the Buchan Chair in Philosophy and Religion, since 1998.



David Gushee is a professor of Christian Ethics at Mercer, where he also chairs the Mercer Lyceum initiative on rebuilding democracy. He is the author of several books on ethics, including "The Righteous Gentiles of the Holocaust," and he serves on the board of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC. His 2003 "Kingdom Ethics: Following Jesus in Contemporary Context," written with Glen Stassen of Fuller Theological Seminary, was named Theology/Ethics book of the year by *Christianity Today*.

Piedmont College is an independent liberal arts college of about 2,600 students with campuses located in Demorest and Athens. Founded in 1897, Piedmont is affiliated with both the UCC and the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches. The college offers undergraduate degrees in 44 major areas, master's degrees in education and business, and a doctoral degree in education.

Same-Sex Couples Seek Recognition in Mobile and Alabama

Sondra Scott and Jan Parker, new members of **Open Table: A Community of Faith** in Mobile, AL, were married in Massachusetts after being together for 28 years. Jan was at Sondra's side in the hospital as she battled cancer. "Fortunately we were in an area where they didn't deny her as part of my family so she could be there at the hospital for me," said Sondra.

Kim McKeand and Cari Searcy were married in California and now live in Mobile.

Kim is the legal parent of their son. Cari would like to share legal custody. "He had to have open heart surgery when he was three years old," said Cari. "So during that time we ran into issues with me being able to administer his care." Standing in their way is Alabama law, which prohibits same-sex marriage and recognition of such marriages from other states. Today, both couples, backed by supporters from the group Southern Equality, the We Do campaign, and Pastor Ellen Sims of Open Table, set out to seek that recognition as they silently walked to the Mobile County License Commission.

It's something that civil rights groups are doing across the south. Jasmine Beach-Ferrara of the Campaign for Southern Equality was among them. "We're traveling across the south this month," she said, "taking action in small towns and larger cities, pushing for full equality under federal law, and we'll keep pushing until we reach that goal."

Once inside the License Commission office, Sondra and Jan sat down to ask that their marriage be recorded in the state records. "We can do that," said the clerk, "but that's all we can legally do." They were told to step to the next window. Kim and Cari did just that, where their marriage certificate was entered into Alabama record. But both couples know that's where it stops.

Latest News

Most Read Articles

Latest News	Most Read Articles
LGBT Ministry and Advocacy in the UCC	Southeast Conference UCC (SEC)
Pathways- A Sojourners' Community	UCC History and Polity
Conference News - February 2013	Southeast Conference Campaign
Local Church News - February 2013	Steps to Planting a New Church
Lifting Up... February 2013	Global Theological Education

SECUCC CONTACTS

- ▶ Conference Minister
- ▶ TAP Director
- ▶ SEC Donations
- ▶ Church Development
- ▶ Communications Director

SECUCC RESOURCES

- ▶ Annual Meeting
- ▶ Global Theological Education
- ▶ Local Church News
- ▶ SEC Churches
- ▶ Seminars/Webinars

FAVORITE LINKS

- ▶ Bridge 4 Faith
- ▶ The Center for Progressive Renewal
- ▶ United Church of Christ
- ▶ Mission Insite
- ▶ Resource Center

EVENTS CALENDAR

February 2013						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	1	2

[Steps to Planting a New Church](#) [News](#) [Contact Us](#) [Donate](#)

